

Improving Your Planning

Improving Our Influence, part 3

Pastor Dave Nichols, Grace Point Church, January 27, 2019

Why Plan?

- **G** _____
(Jeremiah 29:11, 1 Corinthians 14:33)

- **G** _____
(1 Corinthians 14:40, Proverbs 4:26, 16:9)

- **G** _____
(Ephesians 5:15-17)

How to improve your planning?

1. Prepare for _____
(Nehemiah 2:1, Proverbs 13:16, 14:8)

2. Establish _____
(Nehemiah 2:5-6)

3. Plan for _____
(Nehemiah 2:7, Proverbs 22:3, 27:12)

4. Calculate _____
(Nehemiah 2:8a)

5. Anticipate _____
(Nehemiah 2:8b-9)

This weeks discussion guide:

Welcome to “Week 3” of our small group session!

We are glad that you have taken this journey with us digging into God’s Word with others. We pray this is a time of growth, encouragement, and fun as you deepen friendships and make new friends along the way! This session of small groups will wrap up the week of March 24th.

Background:

If we are to become people of greater influence in the lives of those around us, we must improve our planning. Nehemiah had a plan to influence the lives of those living in Jerusalem and this plan involved risk. As the cupbearer to the King, he was expected to be cheerful, positive, and supportive in the King’s presence. For Nehemiah to show his sadness was to risk the consequences of displeasing the King. What can we learn about planning from Nehemiah’s example?

I. Prepare for Opportunity

It was three to four months from the time Nehemiah prayed for success in the presence of the King to the time he showed his sadness to the King. (Nehemiah 1:11-2:2)

- What do you think Nehemiah was doing in regard to the rebuilding of the wall of the city during that time?

People of influence take time to think about the things that are of great concern to them.

Howard Hendricks: “Nothing is more profitable than serious thinking.”

It is easy to get lost in the “tyranny of the urgent” and lose sight of doing what is important.

- What “urgent” matters in your life tend to crowd out the time needed to think about important matters?
- What are some important matters you know God would want you to be taking time to think about?

People of influence are not immobilized by fear.

Read: Nehemiah 2:1-3

- How does Nehemiah respond to his fear?

Read: Psalm 27:1 and Isaiah 41:13.

- What character qualities of God are described in these verses?
- How will these promises help you when you are fearful?

II. Establish a Goal

Read: Nehemiah 2:4-6

Nehemiah was very specific about what he asked of the king. His goal was clear in his mind.

Nehemiah set a time to go to Jerusalem to reach his goal. (Nehemiah 2:6)

- What advantage is there to setting a deadline for reaching a goal?
- What disadvantages may result from setting clear goals with deadlines?

Some things to consider:

- Who is God asking me to become based on **Romans 12:1-2** and **Philippians 2:5-11**?
- What is God asking me to do based on **Matthew 28:18-20**?

III. Foresee Problems

Read: Nehemiah 2:7

Nehemiah thought through the problems related to his goal and had a plan for solving them.

- What kinds of problems/opposition do you need to anticipate as you seek to fulfill the goals God has put on your heart? (physical, emotional, spiritual)

- Do you have a tendency to focus on today's issues or do you look down the road and for see what issues may lie ahead?

IV. Calculate the Cost

Read: Nehemiah 2:8

Nehemiah asked the King for access to the lumber he would need for the project. As a cupbearer, Nehemiah probably needed counsel and instruction from others on how to rebuild the wall. He realized that he could not accomplish this huge project without assistance from others.

Read: Luke 14:28-30

- Who have you asked (or need to ask) to assist you in achieving your goals?
- Why do we find it difficult to ask people for assistance?
- How will you handle criticism when you are working to reach the goals God has given you? Look at **Nehemiah 2:10, 19-20** and **Matthew 5:11-16** as you form your answer.

IV. Calculate the Cost

Read: Nehemiah 2:17-18

Nehemiah knew that completion of this project would require God's blessing and provision.

- When have you seen God's supernatural provision in your life as a means of reaching a God given goal?
- If your goals can be accomplished without God's supernatural provision, do you think they are God's direction in your life or just "good ideas" you are asking God to bless?
- How will studying Nehemiah's example of praying, planning, and boldness help you to take risks and action in your life?